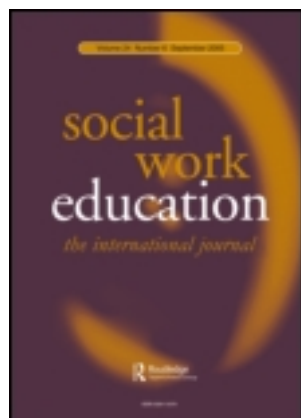


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# Self-reflexive Student Research and its Implications for Social Work Education

Mary Nash

*This paper presents a thematic analysis of postgraduate social work student research on refugee and migrant experiences in Aotearoa New Zealand, collected in the last decade from one university social work programme. The focus is on the ways in which students located themselves in relation to their research, which explored diverse facets of refugee and migrant experience and was invariably connected in some way to their own experiences. Students not only learnt to conduct qualitative research, but also found that having been drawn to locate themselves within it for ethical reasons, their self-reflexive stance had enabled greater personal learning and in some cases, healing. This added greatly to their professional development and through the collation of their research reports it can be shown that for students, locating themselves in relation to their research may be a worthwhile part of learning to be a professional social worker.*

*Keywords:* Research; Self-location; Reflexivity; Refugees; Social Work Education; Professional Development

An Indian man sits quietly in the Heathrow Airport terminal. He seems to look at something inside himself and his eyes are empty, inward-looking. After a couple of days, the terminal staff start to notice him and ask what he is doing, why does he not go out and leave the terminal like all the other passengers? He answers that he has flown all the way from Bombay to London, and is now waiting for his soul to arrive. (Antilla, 1995, p. 77)

## Introduction

This article grew out of a thematic analysis of Masters in Social Work (Applied) (MSW Applied) Research Reports relating to migrant and refugee settlement issues, completed in the last 10 years through the Massey University Social Work Programme.

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Themes collated included push/pull factors for coming to New Zealand, positive and negative settling-in experiences, employment, participation in local communities, family circumstances, access to social services, social work practice, as well as process issues noted by the researchers which affected the collection of data, such as language, gender, and adjustment. In addition, there emerged an unanticipated but fascinating theme, in which the students had linked together their research experience and their social work education journey. When introducing their research all but one of the students had deliberately and reflectively located themselves in their research. Over half of them were refugees or migrants and the others had work-related experience of this service user group. This article focuses on the students' self-reflexive work as they researched and wrote up their research reports. In this context, the theme of reflection, reflexivity and self-location in social work student research provides insight into the question of what students discover about themselves when learning how to do research, and how this learning may contribute to their developing professional social work identity. The students themselves have provided some of the answers.

### **Rationale for the Research**

It is too often said that social workers are not sufficiently involved in research and publication. The research out of which this article has grown identified some of the key themes (as indicated above) that students had reported. In ornithological research the public assist in bird research projects by counting birds and reporting in to a central data bank. These data can then be used by scientists to determine the state of bird populations, issues affecting birds and to then work out conservation strategies (see Birds.Com: <http://www.birds.com/education/research-studies/>). On the same basis as such ornithological research, that 'every little counts', it was anticipated that some generalisable findings would emerge from this collection of student research.

Information derived from the meta-analysis of student research reports, once made available to the public, can then become part of the evidence base for effective and ethical social work practice. It is accordingly argued that there is value in looking at the combined findings of comparable student research projects, as in ornithological research. These students have, if one combines the themes and methods in a consistent and logical way, produced interesting and creditable information on which to deepen our understanding of settlement experiences. Without a meta-analysis of these findings, we are missing opportunities to maximise the value of small-scale student research projects because, while in principle the research reports are available to genuine researchers, their findings are rarely made available through publication. Having supervised or examined many of these research reports, I wanted to be able to add value to them.

The New Zealand Social Work Registration Act was passed in 2003 and Beddoe and Duke (2009) have provided a comprehensive account of social work registration and its impact thus far in New Zealand. According to the Tertiary Education Committee (TEC) Working Group Report (2009), there are 15 tertiary providers of social work education recognised by the New Zealand Social Work Registration Board (SWRB). They consist of four universities, nine industry training providers and two Wananga

which are indigenous Maori universities. However, 'there is a limited capability within the social work workforce for practice-based social work research' (TEC Working Group, 2009, p. 37). This means that more social work research is needed in New Zealand. Social work educators and practitioners require increased time and funding to do research as well as freedom to publish what they find. Adequate time also needs to be allocated to teaching students not only to learn to read and understand research publications but also to be able to design and conduct their own research projects. The three year undergraduate degree courses provided outside the universities do not necessarily teach research to their students and the four year university based undergraduate programmes usually provide one or at best two research papers in their degrees. Not surprisingly, the TEC working party was concerned to point out that it is a challenge to teach research to social work students in their first qualification. Nevertheless, it recommends that all professionally qualifying social work degree programmes should have a strong culture of research-informed learning (TEC Working Group, 2009, p. 42).

The MSW Applied post-graduate programme (in which the students who provided the research reports on which this research is based were enrolled) prepares students for professional practice as qualified social workers eligible to apply for social work registration. The students were enrolled in a paper known simply as 179.895, the Research Report. The Massey University Calendar Prescription describes it as 'An applied study with topics selected from areas relevant to social work, social policy and/or the social services' (Massey University, 2009). According to the course outline its learning objectives are: 'To provide first-time researchers with the opportunity to undertake and complete a research project as social service practitioners under supervision' (Massey University, 2009).

Students are expected to learn the following:

- research planning;
- negotiating supervision;
- completing a literature review;
- using an appropriate methodology;
- identifying ethical issues; and
- writing a research report within agreed timeframes.

### **Learning Styles, Reflection, Reflexivity and Qualitative Research**

Social work educators strive to develop reflective practitioners and also to foster research-minded practitioners. It is therefore essential to consider the links between learning styles, reflection, reflexivity and qualitative research.

#### *Learning Styles and Reflexivity*

Students' learning styles vary, but in accordance with Kolb's experiential learning cycle, the place of experience is acknowledged as important. The place of fieldwork education placements for social work exemplifies this. Social work students are

expected to make the links between what they have been experiencing in fieldwork and the social work theory presented on their course. Their involvement in social work practice (even if only through fieldwork education) provides them with the experience that enables them to be active learners. Through supervision, they can learn to be critical reflective learners thinking about their social work practice and how this might be improved. They can then apply their reflective learning and test it out (Kolb, 1984). In this way, social work students learn to understand their practice in a personal way that helps them to internalise and consolidate their professional development and become reflective practitioners (Adams, 2010, p. 12).

Cooper (2009, p. 431) makes a similar point when he argues that while research is about finding out new things, 'it is also about enlarging the scope of our self-knowledge in the personal, professional and societal domains'. Whether a researcher is able to produce creditable new information will depend on the extent to which he or she is 'emotionally and ideologically open to the possibility of discovering something new, including things we really did not want to know'. In social work research, there is plenty of scope for the researcher to find out things they would prefer not to know, about themselves or their participants (Cooper, 2009, p. 431).

Social work researchers who are prepared to place themselves in their research are therefore doing two things. They are researching in a way that recognises the opportunity for bias in research and to reduce this they acknowledge their interests and connection to the research topic. Many students are therefore taking a social justice and empowerment approach. However, they are also conducting what is called 'practice-near' research as Cooper (2009, p. 431) puts it, in which students allow themselves to come near, or close to their participants, thereby encountering 'the inevitability of personal change'. The test, he argues, of whether research is rightly identified as practice-near is whether the researcher feels in some way personally changed by it (Cooper, 2009, p. 431). And this is exactly what many of the student researchers in the cohort of research reports studied in this thematic research said they felt.

### *Reflexivity and the Researcher*

Reflexivity follows on from reflective practice and Adams identifies two aspects to it: 'awareness of yourself and critical awareness of your practice and its context' (Adams, 2010, p. 14). Adams is writing for the adult student learning to professionalise their alternative medicine practice. However, his points are equally relevant for social work students learning to do research. He argues that the reflexive practitioner makes the critical connexion between their own life experience, their professional learning and what they are doing, with a view to changing how they practise if this can be improved in the light of the kind of critical reflection often encouraged and guided by a skilled supervisor. Fook (2001) describes reflexivity in research as:

The ability to recognise the influence of the researcher's whole self, and context (social, cultural and structural) on every aspect of the research, and the ability to use this awareness in the research act itself. (Fook, 2000, cited in Fook, 2001, p. 127)

*Reflexivity and the Social Work Student Researcher*

Social work students need insight into how they understand the world and their purpose in it if they are to be able to gain the self-control and self-awareness necessary for competent social worker practice. These understandings will influence how they function as social workers. Self-knowledge is important if students are to have sufficient insight into the events in their lives that have drawn them to become aspiring social workers (O'Connor *et al.*, 1999, p. 73). Our biographies, our personal histories, life issues and beliefs all provide a lens through which we view, understand and interact with the world. All social work students are expected to do enough personal work to recognise and come to terms with the person they find themselves to be. In this way their use of self can be refined, purposeful and assured.

It is therefore appropriate for social work research students (in order for them to become reflexive researchers) to locate themselves and their life experience in their research. Almost all the social work students whose research reports have been examined for this research article located themselves in their research. Many acknowledged the work of D'Cruz and Jones (2004) on self-reflexive research in support of their decision to do this. They took to heart the words of Riessman (1994) who explained 'how our subjectivity positions us within the research process and why acknowledging this is important if we want our research to be seen as ethically and methodologically sound' (cited by D'Cruz and Jones, 2004, p. 32) and wrote that:

We are ... humans with emotions, values, social biographies and institutional locations. They shape the problems we choose, the ways we go about studying them, the eyes we bring to observation, and the relationships we have in the field. Locating ourselves in the work, instead of pretending we are not there, helps readers evaluate the situational knowledge we produce. (Riessman, 1994, p. 135)

**Research Design**

The research findings for this article emerged from thematic meta-analysis of the MSW Applied Research Reports relating to migrant and refugee settlement issues and experiences, completed since 1999 at Massey University, Palmerston North.

This research was approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee. One of the ethical conditions of this research project was that it would neither pass judgement on the quality or standards of individual student research projects nor would I look at original data sets. Each research project had itself been screened and approved by the university ethics committee before the student could begin the research. The identity of the students' research participants is confidential and unknown to me. The student research reports are available for loan to other students and staff and are held in our administration office. I can identify by name all the research reports and their authors as part of my data for this research, except for one, which is not in the public domain. I have avoided using research findings from that report, drawing only from the research design and self-location material.

The data were comprised of 16 research reports, in which a total of 59 interviews had been conducted. Twelve students had refugee or migrant backgrounds and four were New Zealand born. Seven students researched general settlement issues—all these students had refugee and migrant backgrounds. Nine students explored social work practice and employment, of whom five had a refugee or migrant background while four were New Zealand born. Many, but not all students were practitioners.

Qualitative, as opposed to quantitative approaches are particularly suitable for small-scale social work research where personal experiences and single case studies are being explored. The traditional divide between numbers and narratives is no longer universally accepted (Nash, 2002) and there is a rich diversity of qualitative paradigms available to the social scientist (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Each of the students had interviewed small numbers of migrants or refugees for their research. The student social work research reports contained data gathered by using narrative and other qualitative methods. Often students had adopted constructivist positions in which they felt they were able to honour the voices of their research participants. The researcher noted that the research methods used were compatible and lent themselves easily to collation to provide information for meta-analysis.

Using a content analysis formula, student research reports were divided into two categories according to whether the student had focused on the settlement experience or more specifically on the migrant or refugee experiences of employment and social work practice as shown in Table 1.

Thematic content analysis of research reports was carried out by a systematic examination of the research reports using the thematic headings listed below:

- Research theme
- Name of student and title of report
- Date of report and country of origin of researcher
- Number of participants interviewed
- Research question
- Research aims
- Self-location in the research
- Findings
- Analysis
- Conclusions
- Recommendations

**Table 1** The Research Reports

	Number of reports	Focus of research	Number of interviews conducted
	7	Settlement experiences	33
	9	Employment and social work practice	26
Total	16		59



From this thematic content analysis, a set of aggregated themes was produced and reflectively analysed in order to build a coherent bigger picture from the total data set. The possibility of making 'every little count' and being able to extrapolate findings from which generalisations would be more creditable could thus be realised.

## Findings

### *How Did Students Choose their Research Topic?*

At the beginning of their course, students are advised that their topics have to be manageable, small scale studies and when participants are involved they must be people who can reasonably be expected to be resilient and not particularly vulnerable. Fook (2001) has reviewed the influences that guide choice of research topic, pointing out the complex interplay of factors she loosely calls 'political' which attract the researcher not only to a particular topic but also to the ways in which they conduct their research. In the context of social work education I believe these choices can be very significant because they may add to the whole process of gaining the self-knowledge that social workers must have in order to be competent practitioners.

Students in this data set chose topics rich in meaning for them. As outlined in Table 1, their research topics fell into the two categories of general settlement experiences or employment and social work practice experiences. Of the students who identified as migrants or refugees, seven chose to research general settlement experiences of people from the same ethnic or geographical backgrounds as themselves. The other group of students, of whom four were New Zealand born, explored the employment and social work practice experiences of migrants and refugees.

I found that the researchers were connected to their research participants in terms of the degree of match between ethnicity and experience. In other words, from the way students located themselves in their research, it was apparent that all those who investigated general settlement experiences shared a similar ethnicity and experience of migration with their participants. The students who researched employment and social work practice issues were experientially connected in some way to these topics, but they were not necessarily matched ethnically or by migration experience to the research participants. In this second group, five student researchers identified themselves as migrants or refugees but the ethnicity of the research participants varied. The research topics and authors are listed in Tables 2 and 3 below.

There was a tendency for those who identified ethnically with participants to write in a way suggestive of being more involved experientially in the feelings and emotions of the participant group. White argues that one of the advantages of 'being a fish' (an insider) is that researching among one's own kind allows one to have a greater familiarity with and accommodation to the ordinariness of the participant's experiential world and easier 'access to sensitive material' (White, 2001, p. 106). The students researching among their own kind were aligned with their participants and in accord with



White's observations they reported that they gained insights and cultural sensitivities through establishing particular rapport with and cooperation from participants.

*How Did Students Choose their Research Methods?*

All the student researchers in this study used qualitative methods involving open-ended interviews and a narrative approach. They showed familiarity with the range of definitions of qualitative social work that Shaw and Gould (2001, pp. 6–7) have listed, emphasising the interpretative and holistic elements of research into the everyday, the ordinary and the subjective experiences captured by the reflexive researcher. Their self-positioning, locating themselves in their research, was used to justify methodological and ethical facets of their work by the sentiments so eloquently captured by Riessman (1994) and already quoted above. In this context, the points that Cooper (2009, p. 438) makes about conventional approaches to research in which researcher objectivity is considered a goal to be sought after if one's research methodology is to gain approval, are significant. He argues that while such a view about:

sound research methodology is that it protects the research(er) from the distorting influence of his or her subjectivity and emotional responses; good practice-near research seems to me to depend upon subjectivity and emotional engagement with the object of research. What then can safeguard us against the prejudices and distortions of the researcher's passions? (Cooper, 2009, p. 438)

Cooper suggests that the reader must discern the value of the research according to the depth and quality of analysis conducted. The student researchers, in so far as they conducted practice-near research, were conscientious in safeguarding the reliability of their findings and where deeply touched by their experiences of research and they were not afraid to acknowledge this. In this way they had the opportunity of learning from their research in order to become research-minded practitioners. They could also gain

**Table 2** Research Reports (Settlement Issues) by Topic 1999–2008

	Author	Date	Topic
1	Linda Bain	2006	The great trek: from Africa to Pasifika
2	Catharina Berryman	2007	Brought up different: the experience of New Zealand born adult children of Dutch immigrants growing up in New Zealand
3	Tanja Rajcic	1999	The little immigrants from former Yugoslavia: possible problems of children after immigration
4	Tracey Makoni	2008	Whose values? Whose culture? The impact of immigration on parenting strategies among Zimbabwean families in New Zealand
5	Faith Maromo	2007	Zimbabwean women in New Zealand: the impact of immigration on women's traditional gender roles
6	Nirmala Narasimhan	2005	Settlement issues faced by Indian immigrant women in urban New Zealand
7	Unnamed student	ND	Title withheld: confidential status

**Table 3** Research Reports (Social Work Practice and Employment) by Topic 1999–2008

	Author	Date	Topic
1	Emma Lamorena	2009	The practice experiences of migrant social workers in New Zealand
2	Bakhtawar Bhagwagar	2005	Silent sufferers? Domestic violence in Indian families in New Zealand
3	Emile Pacifique	2003	Rwandan employment experience in New Zealand: a preliminary qualitative inquiry
4	Ruzana Kaprielova	2008	Promised land: skilled migrants' employment experiences
5	Rachel Kerr	2003	Bringing a plate: helping refugees to incorporate themselves into the New Zealand workforce
6	Edith Ige	2008	New Zealand social workers' perspectives on the mental wellbeing of refugees aged 45–65 years
7	Lisa Pauling	2005	Unique issues for older refugees and best social work practice
8	Olivia Walker	2006	Social work with refugees and asylum seekers in Aotearoa New Zealand: the distinct issues and challenges
9	Mary Patterson	2000	Building a community in Hamilton: the Somali experience

healthy insight into aspects of their inner lives that needed strengthening with beneficial implications for their development as practitioners.

Three clusters of research report themes emerged from the data when they were analysed according to how students located themselves in their research. In each of the three themed clusters there are three student reports. These three clusters are presented below as examples of ways in which students found practice-near research themes to which they felt personally drawn and which they felt had enhanced their personal and/or professional development as social workers. Those who reported on general settlement issues are presented first, followed by those who researched the employment and social work practice issues.

### **Self-location and General Settlement Issues**

There were two sets of insider research reports in which similar themes had been explored. In the first, three students explored the settlement experiences of children. They each identified themselves as former child migrants and they wanted to discover how children expressed their experience of migration today. In the second, three students carried out research into adult South African/Afrikaaner migration experiences.

#### *Theme One: Three Settlement Experiences of Children*

The first student researcher explored the parents' motivation for migration and the children's experiences of adjustment and loss and wanted to discover whether the degree of willingness to come to a new country affects adjustment. She identified herself as a 1970s Afrikaans child migrant, fully acculturated to New Zealand. When challenged to face her origins and identity by the social work course she wrote that in

relating her studies to her own family story, the structural analysis involved had been liberating for her personally and prompted her research into other comparable migrant stories.

The second student researcher looked at the remembered childhood experiences of New Zealand born adult children of Dutch immigrants who grew up in New Zealand.

She investigated the impact of ethnic identity on children of Dutch immigrants and how they thought their parents adapted to a new culture. This student said she was motivated to do research in memory of her own experiences as a Dutch child migrant encouraged by parents to assimilate and be a Kiwi. Growing up, she always felt different from her friends. As an adult, she became curious about her ethnicity and has, through her research experiences and findings, been able to recognise her personal ambivalence towards it. From the way she expressed herself, this was clearly seen as a beneficial outcome of her studies.

The third student, who identified herself as the daughter of a refugee child, also explored childhood experiences. Her focus was on possible difficulties and problems of children from the former Yugoslavia after immigration between 1993 and 1996. She wanted to find out whether they were easily assimilated or were they scarred by their experiences? In her research she had examined possible issues including educational, social, cultural, language and identity/belonging and she had interviewed both parents and children.

### *Theme Two: Three African Migration Experiences*

Of these three students, two were from Zimbabwe and the third from South Africa.

The first explained that the research topic came out of a desire to understand her own experience of being a Zimbabwean woman in New Zealand and to compare this with other Zimbabweans. Her study was on the impact of immigration on the traditional gender roles of women from Zimbabwe. It involved an examination of the migration experiences of Zimbabwean women with a focus on gender issues. In doing this research, she wanted to redress the balance of research on men's experiences. In her opinion, her research helped her towards self-integration as a Zimbabwean woman and a social worker. She felt that her insider status gave added insight to women's narratives.

The second student in this category was interested in studying the impact of immigration on parenting strategies among Zimbabwean families in New Zealand.

Her aim was to gather knowledge on how they experienced the challenges of parenting in a Western environment and to discover what parents feel about the changes they face and how they are adapting to them.

She located herself by writing that her interest grew from her own childhood experiences of growing up in Zimbabwe in a traditional, conservative family, where the child was seen as a second-class citizen. Values such as obedience, and discipline involving punishment administered in a communal family setting were very different from the New Zealand style of bringing up children. How, she wanted to know, do other Zimbabwean families cope?

The third student in this category explored the migration experience in terms of the systems and processes encountered and culture shock. She looked at what New Zealand resources were available to assist adaptation and settlement. Locating herself, she wrote about 'Waiting for the soul to arrive', as described at the beginning of this article. Her family had migrated many years before this research was done and the researcher had considered herself a well-adapted and acclimatised South African.

In her research report, she had produced a poignant parallel account of the soul arriving both for the researcher and the researched.

### *Theme Three: Studies of Employment Experiences of Skilled Refugees and Migrants*

In this set, there was one insider research report which focused on Rwandans, one insider research report with a diverse group of participants and one outsider research report, with similarly diverse participants.

The first of these three students was Rwandan, and he investigated Rwandan employment experience in New Zealand, conducting a preliminary qualitative enquiry on factors that help Rwandan immigrants secure employment in New Zealand.

He located himself as an insider, describing himself as someone who had struggled to get employment in New Zealand. A quota refugee, he arrived here more than 10 years ago, having been a church minister at home. He eventually got a job as a result of starting as a volunteer and has eventually become a social worker and is now professionally qualified.

The second student was New Zealand born and located herself as having worked on field placements for a refugee settlement service for two years. She explained that she had an Iraqi friend who could not find a job. It was his search for employment that inspired her study. She hoped it might prove to be a way of discovering how to help him, and other refugees in the same situation to incorporate themselves into the New Zealand workforce. She explored the barriers they encountered and sought the keys to finding work for refugees. She had illustrated her research report and explained her title as a strengths-based metaphor, for the plate image depicted is of an old grey plate, but with beautiful, exotic food arranged in an appetising manner on it, so like the friend's abilities, is hidden by language and culture barriers.

The third student in this category looked at skilled migrants' employment experiences and the employment challenges migrants faced. She located herself in the research as an immigrant who has struggled to find work because of language difficulties and met with discrimination in the workplace. Her involvement with a refugee settlement service had also informed and motivated the research.

### *Implications for Student Researchers of Self-location in Relation to their Research*

Migrants, whether they are voluntary immigrants or refugees, are people whose lives have been more or less dislocated at a certain point in time and who must find ways to retain or if necessary reconstruct their identities. In many instances, and particularly in the case of those I have termed insiders, many research students explicitly acknowledged the self-healing, self-knowing functions performed for them by their

research process and its findings. It is sometimes suggested that social work students are drawn to work through issues to which they are in some way experientially connected. There is a sense in which the student research reports analysed here indicate ways in which students have been able to measure their own migration experience against another group and found this in some way personally helpful.

## Discussion and Conclusions

This article shows how student learning took place on two planes through the MSW (Applied) research exercise. Students learnt how to conduct a small-scale piece of qualitative research which was their stated task and learning goal. In addition, they discovered that when they had completed their research they had also learnt about themselves in relation to their identity and to how they might function as professional social workers.

Many of these research reports were by students from other countries, who know what it is like to be marginalised, discriminated against or simply regarded by people in power as 'too different' to work for them. As researchers these students provide a unique source of insider, experiential information. Other students learnt from participants about their grief, pain and losses, together with their encounters with discrimination and isolation. They noted the resilience and tenacity of refugees and the need for social workers to gain knowledge about the challenges confronting this service user group, in order to improve social work practice skills. These outsider students made comments in their reports which indicated their concern and commitment to social justice as a result of their research findings as, for example, the student who soberly recognised how older refugees were likely to be forgotten by practitioners who did not know how to work with them.

Whitmore (2001, p. 91) discusses the way in which locating oneself in one's research contributes to the anti-exclusionary quality of one's work [as identified by Truman *et al.* (2000)]. It is an action that recognises the significance of who and what the researcher is, not only in relation to the qualities of their data collection and how they collected it, but also in relation to how they interpret their findings and what conclusions they draw. Whitmore cites Everitt (1998, p. 112) saying that: 'The values, assumptions and cultural beliefs of those who shape the research agenda . . . should be treated, like data, as evidence'.

Invariably students qualified their findings because their projects were small scale, preventing them from making generalisations; yet work of such potential interest deserves notice and since meta-analysis has the capacity to make generalisations from small research projects possible, it ought perhaps to be more encouraged.

The theme examined and discussed in this article is the way the students had located themselves in their research and what this meant for them in their personal and professional development as social workers. Many, using qualitative and narrative enquiry methods, recognised the parallel processes between research and carrying out a social work assessment. Shaw and Gould (2001, p. 151) recognise the 'therapeutic tradition' of 'reflexive self-accounts' and some of these research students

acknowledged that they felt they had benefitted in a variety of therapeutic ways from this research.

The student who provided the opening quotation about the Indian man at Heathrow airport waiting for his soul to catch up with him, ended her research report with an account of how, at a time of personal loss, she discovered the practical and enveloping love and support of the local community into which she had settled. Her experience had, she indicated, parallels with those of her participants. The new settler's desire to settle into a new community and make a new home is one that these research reports all recognise. Some of the researchers have succeeded in reaching this goal, others were lucky enough, being New Zealand born, not to have to, and some were still working on it. All, however, intimated their sympathy and empathy with their participants and hoped, as a result of their research, to be better equipped as social workers in this field.

Finally, the link that social work research students make to their reflexive selves in social work education is important and research supervisors should encourage them to reflect on this aspect of their research. Many of these students have acknowledged the significance of their research for them personally. Through their research, which was outward looking, they have been able to reflect and grow inwardly.

### Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge the helpful comments made by my colleague, Kieran O'Donoghue, and the two assessors who looked at this article.

### Note

- [1] The names of the authors of the unpublished research reports are to be found in Tables 2 and 3. I have deliberately not directly attributed comments to particular student authors in respect of their privacy. The student who is not named had requested that her findings, in so far as they related directly to her participants, should not be made public.

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